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MONTANA SOICC NEWSLETTER

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Labor Market Information

Labor market information (LMI) is a mosaic of data obtained from administrative records and statistical surveys. It is made up of a variety of economic and social demographic information which includes the number and characteristics of people and jobs in a specifically defined geographic area. The information describes current conditions and projects conditions at a future date. LMI includes everything that helps measure changes taking place in the labor force.

At local and state levels, LMI is used by public and private sector employers, planners, and administrators in Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) programs, counselors in vocational education and rehabilitation settings, Job Service placement specialists, and Private Industry Councils.

Most important of all, individuals such as job seekers and students benefit from LMI. The information provides job seekers with an overview of economic conditions in their area and an assessment of the employment potential of different occupations.

Nationally, LMI is used by business associations, labor unions, the education community, social welfare institutions, and public interest groups, as well as the federal government. The information is used for economic analysis, for policy development, for planning education, training and other human services, and for research in labor market behavior and related topics.

Most state and local LMI is developed by the state employment security agencies through the statistical programs they operate in cooperation with U.S. Department of Labor agencies. Under these programs, the states collect and analyze data on such matters as unemployment, hours worked and wages earned, and occupational projections. This data is supplemented with additional statistical information such as that provided by the Census Bureau.

LMI Describes People and Jobs In Your Area

The basic components of LMI include:

- **Population data:** characteristics of the population including age, race, sex, family size, income, education status, veteran, and handicap status;
- **Labor force data:** past, current and future trends of the number of people employed and unemployed, labor force participation rates, characteristics of age, race and sex, and industry detail and characteristics;

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- **Occupational data:** the number and characteristics of people employed and unemployed in each occupation, and the number and characteristics of jobs in each occupation;
- **General economic trends:** factors that affect employment such as housing starts, retail sales, plant closings, and permanent layoffs; and
- **Career information:** information on where and how to find jobs such as job search information and occupational trends and characteristics.

LMI Helps to Make Planning and Performance Evaluation Decisions

Understanding the current and potential employment and unemployment situation locally is an essential part of establishing, operating, and evaluating skill training programs. Labor market information can reveal immediate community needs and emerging problem areas, and can pinpoint alternative courses of action. LMI can be a tool in determining:

- Policy and program direction to equitably serve citizens; to target programs toward growth occupations; to initiate and respond to local economic development efforts; and to coordinate activities among the appropriate actors.
- Program performance to meet standards and to evaluate the program plan and activities.

Montana LMI Publications

The Montana SOICC and Research and Analysis Bureau of the Montana Department of Labor and Industry produce several LMI publications, which include the following:

- **Montana Employment and Labor Force** - A quarterly publication which reports current labor market information from statewide to county basis. The report contains narratives on economic conditions throughout Montana, current and historical labor force tabulations, and selected indicators of Montana's economy. Unemployment rates by county, unemployment insurance activities, and the U.S. Consumer Price Index are examples of other information provided.
- **Montana Supply/Demand Report** - An annual publication which provides a statewide comparison of supply (workers) and demand (jobs). This report is a valuable tool for planners, counselors, and job seekers.
- **Annual Planning Information** - An annual report which provides data on labor force characteristics for those involved in employment and training processes. Narratives describe the past year. Tables and graphs show projections of population, labor force, employment, unemployment, and economic status for the state.
- **Stats in Brief** - A handy pocket-sized reference published monthly that contains data on employment by county, labor force area, and congressional district. It also contains industrial employment and hours and earnings for the state, National Consumer Price Index, new business formations, and unemployment insurance summary.
- **Industry/Occupation Outlook** - A publication revised with every update of projections. The latest publication provides projections for 1986-1995 on the state's industry and occupational employment trends. The information contained in this report can be very useful to students, job seekers, educators, job counselors, and public and private employers.
- **Montana Workforce to the Year 2000** - Published in August, 1988. Beginning with a glance at Montana's past, this publication looks to the state's future in terms of demographic patterns, employment growth, technological changes, educational needs and workplace changes. Population, workforce, and employment projections are compared with national trends.
- **Montana's Growing and Declining Industries and Occupations, 1986-1995** - Published in April, 1989. Taking a look at Montana's employment picture, this publication combines employment projections with historical industry perspective, and profiles some of the occupations expected to provide employment opportunities through 1995.

These publications are available from the Research and Analysis Bureau, Department of Labor and Industry, P.O. Box 1728, Helena, Montana 59624.

Interested individuals or organizations can also receive training on the availability and use of national and Montana-specific career, occupational, and labor market information through Improved Career Decision Making (ICDM) workshops. The ICDM workshop objective is to help counselors help individuals to make career decisions that better reflect the realities of the labor market.

Three ICDM workshops will be offered in the spring of 1991. The Montana SOICC received a Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act grant from the Office of Public Instruction to make this training available to counselors in Montana. The workshops are planned for Billings, Butte, and Kalispell. More information regarding the workshops will be available in upcoming issues of this newsletter.

"Career Planning--A Lifelong Process" Conference

The many changing aspects of the world of work and the career planning process were presented to participants at the **Career Planning--A Lifelong Process** Conference held April 10-11, 1990 in Great Falls. The conference provided a chance to those attending to:

- learn why career development is a lifelong process;
- receive up-to-date information on Montana's economic and occupational future;
- learn how occupational and educational information is used in career information systems; and
- network with others interested in career counseling.

The conference was sponsored by the Montana SOICC, the Montana Council on Vocational Education, the Montana Career Information System, the Office of Public Instruction, and the Military Entrance Processing Station.

Keynote speakers included Dr. Cal Crow of the Northwest Cooperative Education Center in Washington; Dr. Bruce McKinlay, executive director of the National Career Information System; and Dr. Paul Polzin, director of the University of Montana's Bureau of Business and Economic Research.

Dr. Crow introduced information about changes in the workplace that require both counselors and clients to think about career decision making in new ways. The emphasis on change, flexibility, multiple career paths, and lifelong learning demands a more global view of the workplace. Dr. Crow provided the following information to participants:

Workplace Basics: The Skills Employers Want

by Anthony P. Carnevale, Leila J. Gainer, Ann S. Meltzer, and Shari L. Holland,
Training and Development Journal, October, 1988.

Today's workplace requires employees to have not only the standard academic skills, say employers, but also other key basics as a foundation for building broader, more sophisticated job-related skills. These additional basics are:

- Learning to learn--the ability to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to learn effectively, no matter what the learning situation.
- Listening--the ability to heed the key points of customers', suppliers' and co-workers' concerns.
- Oral communications--the ability to convey an adequate response to those concerns.
- Problem solving--the ability to think on one's feet.

- Creative thinking--the ability to come up with innovative solutions.
- Self esteem--the ability to have pride in one's self and believe in one's potential to be successful.
- Goal setting/motivation--the ability to know how to get things done.
- Personal and career development skills--the awareness of the skills needed to perform well in the workplace.
- Interpersonal skills--the ability to get along with customers, suppliers, and co-workers.
- Teamwork--the ability to work with others to achieve a goal.
- Negotiation--the ability to build consensus through give and take.
- Organizational effectiveness--the understanding of where the organization is headed, and how one can make a contribution.
- Leadership--the ability to assume responsibility and motivate co-workers when necessary.

A Changing Workforce for a Changing Workplace

by Cal Crow, Ph.D.

Elements of the old workplace included:

- Structured
- Stable, secure
- Employer will take care of employees
- Pay linked to position
- Financial incentives
- Linear careers
- Continual employment
- Work for others
- Local or national economy
- White, male influence
- Job specific; clear delineation of duties
- Large employers
- Labor intensive
- Worker as instrument
- Hierarchical
- Education is "completed"
- Education and work considered separate activities
- Focus on product
- Error, "slippage" tolerated, even expected
- Dollar driven

Elements of the new workplace include:

- Flexible
- Changing; little security
- Employees responsible for themselves
- Pay linked to productivity, et al
- Variety of incentives
- Non-linear careers
- Frequent periods of unemployment
- Self-employment
- International, global economy
- Multi-ethnic, female influence
- Many duties; cross training common
- Small employers/units
- Knowledge intensive
- Worker as human resource
- Participatory
- Lifelong learning
- Education and work commingled
- Focus on customer service
- Total quality management/control
- Value driven



Career Planning--A Lifelong Process conference planners were (left to right): **Anne Wolfinger**, *Montana CIS*; **Ed Dahy**, *Navy Recruiting Processing Station, Butte*; **Kate Kahle**, *Montana SOICC*; **Gene Harris**, *Military Entrance Processing Station, Butte*; **Cathy Shenkle**, *Research and Analysis Bureau, Dept. of Labor & Industry*; **Dave Ducello**, *Research & Analysis Bureau, Dept. of Labor & Industry*; **Judy Birch**, *Montana Office of Public Instruction*; and **Bob Arnold**, *Montana SOICC*.

Montana Apprenticeable Occupations



What is apprenticeship? Apprenticeship is a method of teaching highly technical skills via a combination of on-the-job training and related classroom instruction.

Apprenticeships offer job satisfaction, highly marketable skills, competitive wages, and opportunities for growth. Former apprentices earn higher wages, have more stable work histories, and are promoted sooner and more often than workers who have not trained in apprenticeship programs.

Most apprenticeships vary in length from two to five years. Each apprentice works in an actual job setting under the supervision of certified journeymen. Apprentices are required to take supplemental training courses for their occupations. These courses are usually offered by vocational technical centers, adult education centers, correspondence schools, and apprenticeship councils.

Qualifications for apprenticeships vary by trade, employer, and local apprenticeship councils, but usually require a minimum age of 18, a high school diploma or its equivalent, and physical requirements to work in a specific trade. Applicants may have to take an aptitude test and may be interviewed by a selection committee. Starting wages for an apprentice vary from 35 to 80 percent of a journeyman's wage.

The Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Apprenticeship and Training Bureau and local apprenticeship councils govern the scope of work, courses of instruction, length of training, and rate of pay for apprentices. Apprentices who complete a specific program are given certificates which show that they are qualified as highly skilled journeymen in their respective craft or trade.

About 150 occupations are currently recognized as being apprenticeable in Montana. The Apprenticeship and Training Bureau is currently working hard to expand the apprenticeship programs to different occupational areas.

For more information about apprenticeships, write or call the Montana Apprenticeship and Training Bureau, Department of Labor and Industry, P.O. Box 1728, Helena, Montana 59624; phone (406) 444-4511.

Montana Apprenticeable Occupations is a recent publication which provides current information about the apprenticeable occupations in Montana. Limited numbers of this publication will be available in June, 1990. To receive a copy, write to the Montana SOICC, P.O. Box 1728, Helena, Montana 59624

Montana Vo-techs Graduate To Degree Programs

by Patricia Sullivan of the Missoulian

Montana's vocational technical centers, which have long awarded certificates of completion to graduates, will start awarding degrees in some programs as soon as this summer. The associate of applied science degree, which is not currently issued in Montana, is expected to replace the certificate in the Missoula legal-assistance program by June.

"This is one of the most significant occurrences in the vocational technical system in the state," said Brady Vardemann, Montana's deputy commissioner for vocational technical education. "It is of enormous importance."

The difference between a certificate and a degree is a job to some vo-tech students. Employers clearly prefer a degree, according to a survey of 350 businesses conducted by the Missoula vo-tech student association in the fall of 1988. Some accreditation agencies won't even inspect a school that does not grant the degree. Without a degree, some states won't license certain professionals, paraprofessionals, and trades people.

"Another reason is it makes the institution look like an institution of higher learning, rather than a grade 13," said Jay Sunderland, president of the Missoula Vo-Tech's student body.

"We're a credential-oriented society," said Dennis Lerum, director of Missoula's vo-tech center. "We have folks who are competing for jobs with other students who haven't gone through as technical a program but who have a degree."

The AAS degree is supposed to be a "terminal" degree, designed for students who intend to go into the job market. The state's community colleges already offer two "transfer" degrees--associate of arts and associate of science degrees--aimed toward students who plan to attend four-year colleges or universities.

"Unfortunately, a number (of students) think this is the same as the transfer of all credits into the university system," Carrol Krause, commissioner of higher education, told the state Board of Regents earlier this year. "I think we have to tell them daily that's not the point of the AAS."

Vardemann, Lerum and Sunderland said students who are now enrolled clearly understand the difference, and still support creation of the new degree.

The reason Montana is the "only state in the known world" to offer certificates instead of degrees for its two-year technical programs, Vardemann said, is because until last July, the vo-tech centers were operated by the state's high school districts.

"The crux of it is, we're penalizing our students," she said. "The (university system) regents, rightfully so, were reluctant to allow high-school districts to grant a post-secondary degree."

Regents still have to approve each program that wants to offer a degree instead of a certificate, and one of the first to seek that diploma will be Missoula Vo-Tech's legal assistant program, which just started in the fall. Vardemann said the diploma probably won't be approved in time for the May 16 graduation, but she hopes to award it retroactively or to postpone awarding the degree until after regents approve it.

Other programs likely to apply for the degree include the occupational therapy and respiratory therapy programs in Great Falls, civil technology program in Butte, the air frame and power plant program in Helena, and the business office technology program in Billings.

SOURCE: The Missoulian, March 1, 1990



Did You Know...

- 18 of the 20 fastest growing occupations within the next decade will require vocational technical education.
- Vocational technical education prepares students for 26 of 37 occupations that the Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts will account for the largest number of new jobs by 1995.
- Approximately 83 percent of future jobs will require education beyond high school, but will not require a baccalaureate degree.
- 60 percent of all high school graduates enter some form of postsecondary education.
- Of the 1980 high school graduates who immediately entered 4-year colleges, fewer than one-sixth attained a baccalaureate degree.

SOURCE: **MCVE Communicator**, Spring 1990

New "Occupational Outlook Handbook"

The 1990-91 **Occupational Outlook Handbook** will be released in early May, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The new issue of the **Handbook**, the most comprehensive source of national occupational information, will include detailed statements of 250 occupations. These occupations covered 86 percent of all U.S. jobs in 1988, over 101,000,000 jobs. Twenty-two occupations have been added, many in the managerial field.

The **Occupational Outlook Handbook** will be available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, Washington, DC 20402, or from its regional bookstores. Costs will be \$19 for the paper cover edition, and \$30 for the hard cover volume. Orders must be pre-paid, with checks or money orders made payable to the "Superintendent of Documents."

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Kate Kahle, Editor
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Robert N. Arnold
Program Officer
Montana SOICC

650 copies of this newsletter were produced at an individual cost of 20.52 cents each for a total cost of \$133.40, which includes \$54.41 for printing and \$78.99 for distribution.

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